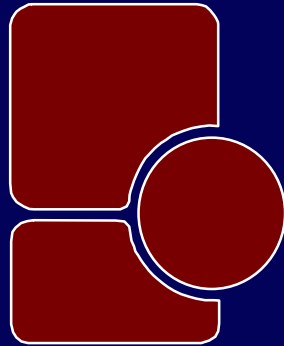


**Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission
of the Virginia General Assembly**



**Special Study: Revolutionary War Veteran
Gravesites in Virginia (Interim Report)**

**Staff Briefing
December 13, 1999**

Introduction

2

Staff for this study:

Robert B. Rotz, Project Leader

Joan Irby, Research Support

Gordon Poindexter, Intern

Roger Ward, Intern, Summer 1999

Presentation Outline

3



Background



Overview of Information Collected for the Interim Report



Planned Research Activities for the Final Report

Study Mandate

4

- **House Joint Resolution 530 and Senate Joint Resolution 345 from the 1999 Session direct JLARC to conduct a review of Revolutionary War veteran burial sites**
- **Study is to be done with the assistance of the Department of Historic Resources and in cooperation with the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, and other interested associations**

Study Mandate

(continued)

5

- The study mandate requires the development of an interim report with a compiled list of burial sites
- This interim report was developed to meet that requirement
- A final report is required by the 2001 Session. That report is to address longer-term issues, such as future procedures for adding sites to the list, and how a program of maintaining and restoring Revolutionary War veteran grave sites might best be funded and implemented

Virginia Has Program for Veteran Grave Sites of the Civil War, But Not the Revolutionary War

6

- **Currently, the State has a program for the listing, maintenance, and restoration of Confederate veteran grave sites**
 - the *Code of Virginia* provides grants to a variety of organizations for the maintenance of these graves and memorials
 - more than 6,500 graves or markers are recognized in statute
 - to implement the grant program, the Department of Historic Resources contracts with the United Daughters of the Confederacy to conduct cost surveys and manage recipient expenditures
 - Appropriations Act contains \$59,350 in FY 2000 for this grant program
- **However, the State does not have a similar program for the grave sites of Revolutionary War veterans**

It Is Unclear How Many Revolutionary War Veterans Are Buried in Virginia

7

- The Historical Register of Virginians in the Revolution contains approximately 65,000 entries for Virginians who served
- However, the number of veterans actually buried in Virginia is considerably less:
 - many Virginians left the State after the war, and far fewer veterans from other states moved to and were buried in Virginia
- Thus, the number of veterans with grave sites that could be potentially located in Virginia today is a subset of a total group of veterans whose number is not known

Several Factors Limit the Number of Grave Sites that Can Be “Found” Today

8

- Often, people in 18th and 19th century Virginia were buried on their property in unmarked graves or in graves marked only by wooden crosses or simple fieldstones with no inscription
- Families marked other graves with carved word or stone but the inscriptions have badly faded
- Many grave sites have been overgrown by weeds
- Other sites have disappeared through development or have been destroyed by vandalism or by animals

Published Sources of Information on Revolutionary War Veteran Burial Sites

9

- Several published sources note burial locations of Revolutionary War veterans. National sources include:
 - Listing published in 1993 by the Sons of the American Revolution contains over 69,000 soldiers and patriots buried across the various states
 - A four-volume abstract, prepared in 1987 based on information reported over the years by the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), contains over 58,500 veteran names and information on burial locations
- In addition, various cemetery books and records exist for many of Virginia's localities

Compiled List of Revolutionary War Veteran Gravesites in Virginia Has Been Lacking

10

- **The two national listings and the locality cemetery records contain valuable but incomplete information**
- **A review of the Virginia portion of these national listings, and Virginia cemetery records, reveals that there is substantial variation in the particular veterans with reported grave sites that are recognized in these works**
- **The NSSAR has been working on a project to update its 1993 national listing that should provide more comprehensive information for each state (expected publication in 2000)**

Research Activities to Develop a List of Veterans and a Cemetery List

11

■ For this interim report, JLARC staff:

- identified subset of Virginians from 1993 NSSAR file and from draft updated lists furnished recently to JLARC staff by the NSSAR
- identified subset of Virginians from NSDAR data (includes a review of card files at NSDAR headquarters)
- reviewed abstract of pension and bounty land warrants to identify veterans receiving a grant in later years while still living in Virginia (to identify veterans who may be buried in Virginia, but are currently without a reported grave site)
- sent spreadsheets of veteran names to local historical societies, genealogical societies, SAR chapters, and the DAR historian, and recorded the information sent back
- reviewed selected locality cemetery records at the Library of Virginia

Presentation Outline

12

- ☐ Background
- ☒ **Overview of Information Collected for the Interim Report**
- ☐ Planned Research Activities for the Final Report

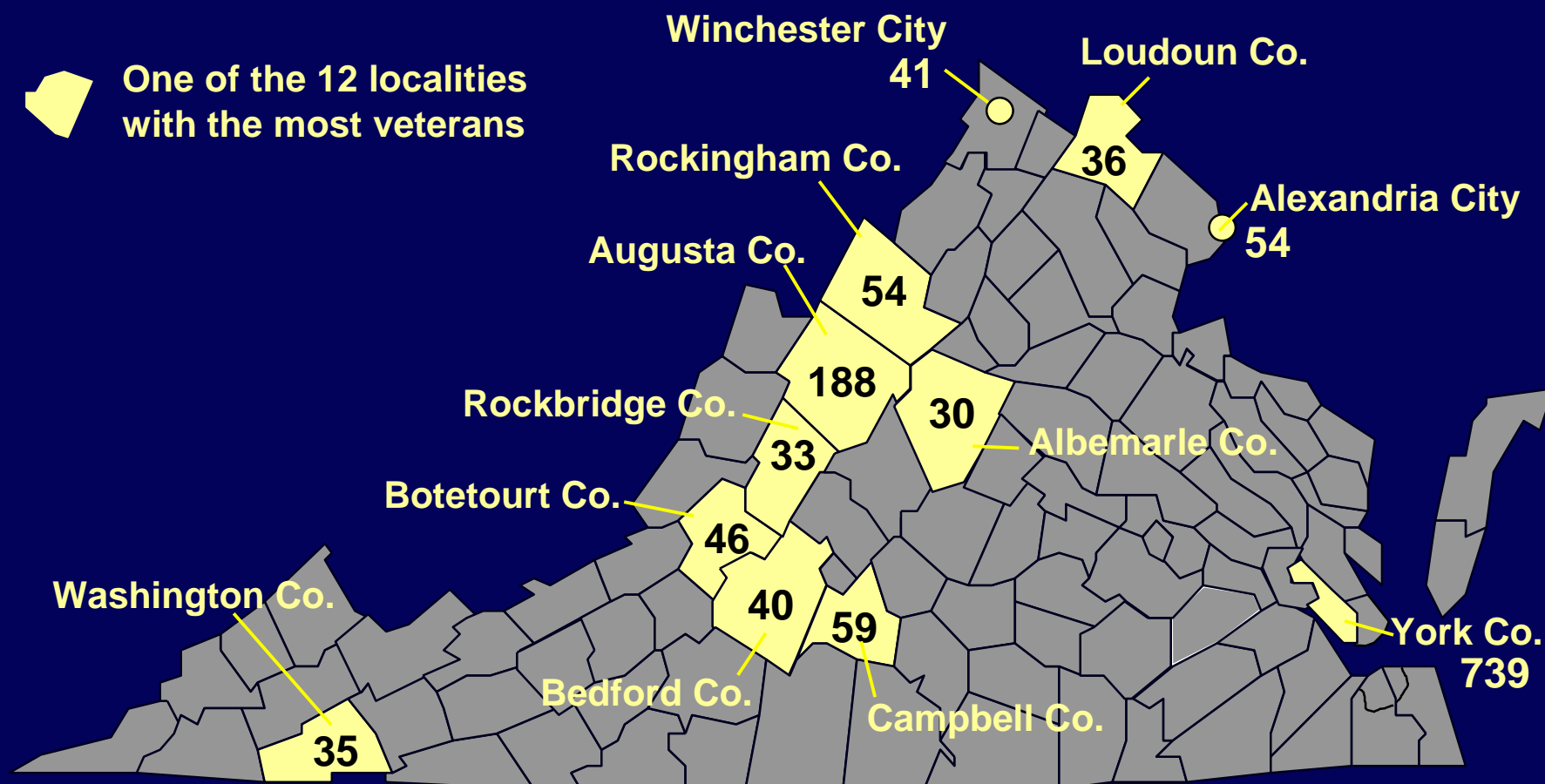
Contributions to the Compiled Database by Source

13

Source	Total Veterans	Unduplicated Count
NSSAR National List, 1993	1,025	179
NSDAR Reports and Files	573	275
“Other Sources”	1,404	531
Combinations of the Above Sources	NA	963
NSSAR Updated List	1,549	161
TOTAL	NA	2,109

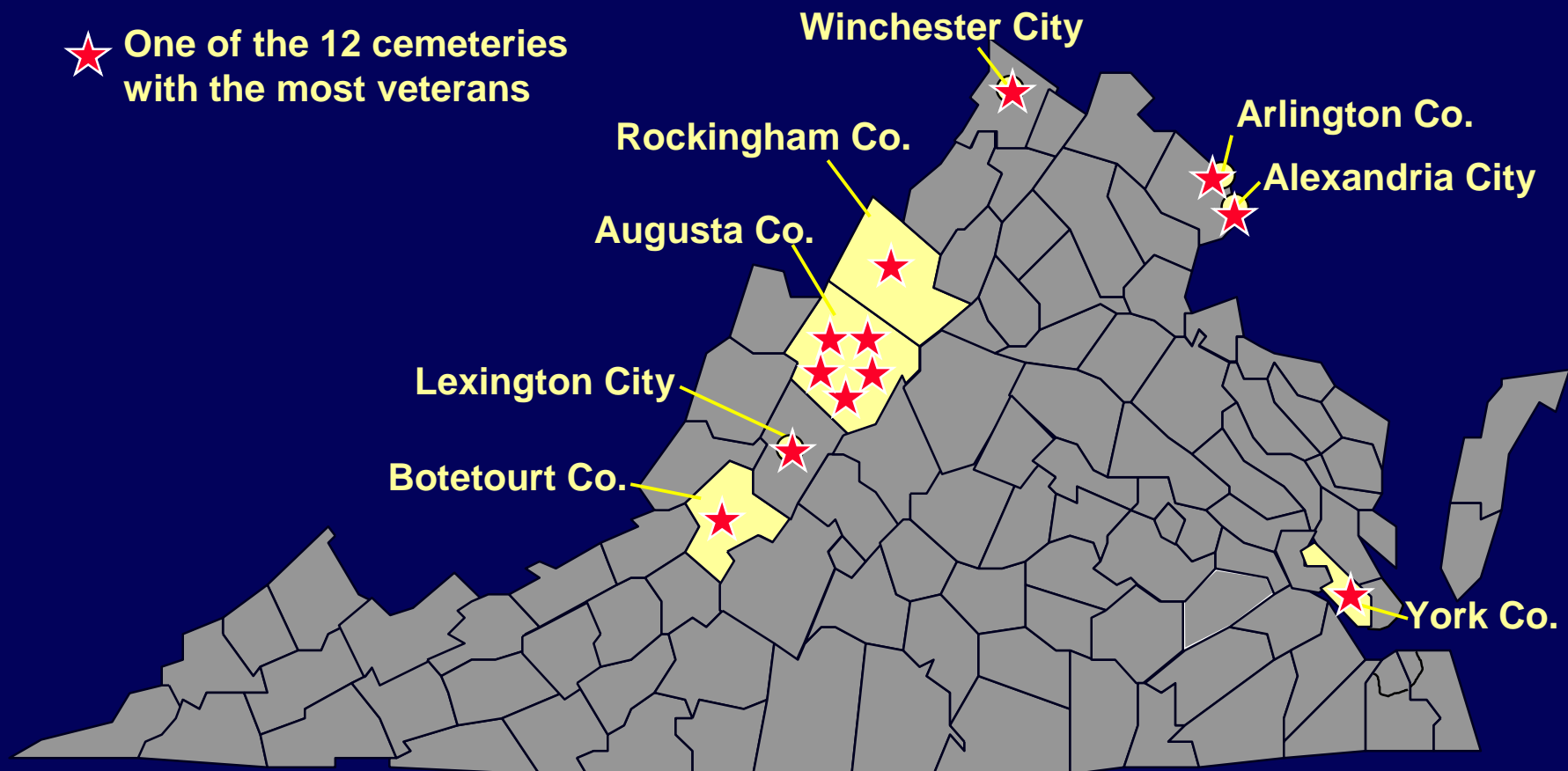
Localities with the Highest Numbers of Veterans Reportedly Buried or Recognized

14



Location of Cemeteries with the Most Veterans Reportedly Buried or Recognized

15



Interim Report Appendixes Provide Details of Information Found in Review

16

- **Appendix C -- an index organized alphabetically based on the last name of the veteran, for use by readers who may wish to locate a particular veteran**
- **Appendix D -- a veteran listing that is organized by the locality of burial, and that provides information about the cemetery or location of the veteran's grave site or marker**
- **Appendix E -- a listing of veterans buried or recognized at the Colonial National Historical Park at Yorktown**
- **Appendix F -- a compiled, unduplicated list of "sites" where soldiers are reportedly buried or recognized**

Report Lists Should Be Regarded as “Works in Progress”

17

- Appendix lists should be viewed as work that will be updated, corrected, and improved as more information becomes available
- House Joint Resolution 530 recognizes this type of continued need even beyond the duration of the study, stating that the JLARC review should include a recommended procedure “for adding discovered grave sites to the list”

Several Questions Remain Open for the Next Phase of the Review

18

- As noted, over 2,000 veterans reportedly buried or recognized have been identified during this phase
- However, several questions about these veterans remain unanswered:
 - While these sites have been reported, how many can actually be found if an attempt is made to visit them?
 - Is there really something at the site to restore, maintain, and preserve? (many grave sites will be unmarked)
- The information reported during this phase provides a good starting point for further investigation

Presentation Outline

19

- ☐ Background
- ☐ Overview of Information Collected for the Interim Report
- ☒ **Planned Research Activities for the Final Report**

Planned Data Collection Activities for the Final Report

20

- More follow-up to the work from phase one, to ensure that the compiled cemetery listing is as accurate and complete as possible
- Obtain more specific information about the existing condition of the grave sites for a sample, which will likely entail staff field visits to:
 - personally observe gravesite conditions, and in some cases, photograph the grave site
 - determine if anyone is currently preserving the site
 - pinpoint the location of the site for future reference

Use of Global Positioning Technology

21

- One of the problems that has hindered past efforts to preserve knowledge of the grave site locations has been the imprecision of directions to the grave sites
- For a sample of sites, JLARC staff plan to use global positioning technology to specify the longitude and latitude of the visited grave sites:
 - for future reference
 - to encourage the collection of similar data for all possible sites, as the compiled list is further developed and maintained into the future

Other Activities for the Final Report

22

- Use the sample information regarding the physical condition and present status of grave sites to help prepare estimate of the costs of care for the sites
- Examine the program or approach used to fund the care of gravesites for Confederate veterans
- Contact some other states to learn how they address restoration and maintenance of gravesites
- Solicit input from various parties regarding how such a program should work, and what role, if any, these organizations might be willing to perform to make such a program work